

Kenneth Hemmler  
Hemmler12@aol.com  
570.351.7857  
108 Big Hills Road  
Lake Ariel, PA 18436

Representatives, I'd like to thank you for accepting my testimony for the House Labor and Industry Committee's hearing on public sector union reform legislation on Monday, November 15, 2021. As a public school teacher, I believe these bills are crucial at this juncture on principle and on the basis of my personal experience.

I teach computer science at a public elementary school in Northeastern Pennsylvania. My wife is also a teacher in a neighboring school district. We love teaching but have had numerous problems with our union, the PSEA. We're especially frustrated by how the PSEA and its parent union, the NEA, constantly spend our money on political activities we disagree with.

I submitted an opt-out letter to my PSEA local this summer. Upon doing so I was sent numerous pieces of mail from PSEA stating I couldn't afford to lose the benefits that they provided implying that they were the only way to have protection and a pension. I knew that wasn't true, and have continued to advocate to others about the importance of getting out of the union if it does not line up with their values and beliefs.

I'm discouraged to think about how many teachers don't know the truth, and who don't know their rights when it comes to union membership. We do have a constitutional right to resign union membership, refuse to make political contributions that violate the First Amendment, and to work at our jobs free from misinformation, coercion, and harassment.

I hope you'll consider the bills under discussion at this hearing so that teachers and thousands of other government employees will have the protection of state law for their free and informed choice about whether to be part of a union.